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ABSTRACT

In an effort to increase the retention rates of high-risk students in allied health programs, the Medical Campus of Miami-Dade Community College has developed a strategic plan for retention that employs a systems approach to the integration of academic support services, emotional and social supports, and personalized communication. The assumptions underlying the retention plan involve the need to remove external barriers to attendance, promote regular attendance, reinforce student motivation, provide an appropriate array of learning materials, and establish a nurturing environment. Other assumptions are related to the college's information systems and stress the need for user friendly systems and a database and equipment to track student progress. Two important features of the retention effort will be the counselors/mentors with whom students interact throughout their experience at the campus, and the peer tutoring and support provided by fellow students. The following objectives will be pursued: (1) personalizing communication regarding the students' academic performance and attendance record; (2) customizing types of personal and academic support and resources; (3) enhancing data management; and (4) systematically analyzing course and program effectiveness. Attachments include sample forms, reports, and letters illustrating various aspects of the retention program. (ALB)

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MIAMI-DADE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS

RETENTION THROUGH INTERVENTION: A Strategic Plan for Retention of High-Risk Students

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An Academic, Technological and Psycho/social Approach

A Strategic Plan for Retention of High-Risk Students

Miami-Dade Community College
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Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer

a presentation delivered at the
1989 International NISOD Conference
on Teaching Excellence

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	i
Introduction	1
Background	3
Assumptions	6
Objectives	9
Summary and Conclusions	13
Exhibits	15
forms	16
reports	19
letters	27

PREFACE

A major problem for education in general, and our campus particularly, is the decline in preparedness of students. Students who seek careers in health-care technologies but who enter the institution with basic skills deficits face extended time frames to see their goals fulfilled. Along the way many things interfere with the successful completion of their objectives. There are many reasons why students face barriers and some have been traditionally outside the realm of those who teach and those who learn.

Each of us, nevertheless, needs to accept some responsibility for our present situation and contribute to its solution by altering some of the approaches now used in general education and basic skills courses while taking advantage of the new technologies available to manage information on students.

The purpose of this project is to communicate the strategies developed by the Medical Center Campus of Miami-Dade Community College to increase retention rates of high-risk students using a three faceted approach. This approach incorporates academic supports, emotional and social supports and a more personalized system of communicating with and to faculty and to students deemed high-risk.

INTRODUCTION

Miami-Dade Community College is a multi-campus institution with four major campuses and numerous outreach centers. It is located in Dade County, Florida, and shares the same kinds of problems faced by most large urban community colleges.

The Medical Center Campus is the smallest and newest of the four campuses. In addition to the Nursing and Allied Health Technologies programs at Medical Center, a full range of basic skills courses and general education courses are offered. During the 1987-88 academic year, Miami-Dade enrolled 5,148 full-time foreign visa students--more than any other college or university in the United States. It is also the only community college enrolling students from more than 100 nations.

The first step in our strategic plan for retention focuses on students who enter the institution with basic skills deficiencies. The second step will entail tracking these students beyond their basic skills courses through general education and on into program. A recent survey of Miami-Dade graduates indicates that of those who succeed look to a pivotal individual in their educational experience who provided the extra attention that motivated the student to complete the degree. All phases of this retention plan focus on the importance of the individual and acceptance of individual differences.

Fully 70 percent of the students at our campus require remediation in at least one of the basic skill areas. In addition they are as culturally and ethnically diverse as they are varied in their academic goals and educational needs. We felt that an

integrated systems approach was needed to better provide for students who enter with special needs and whose schedules are as varied as their backgrounds.

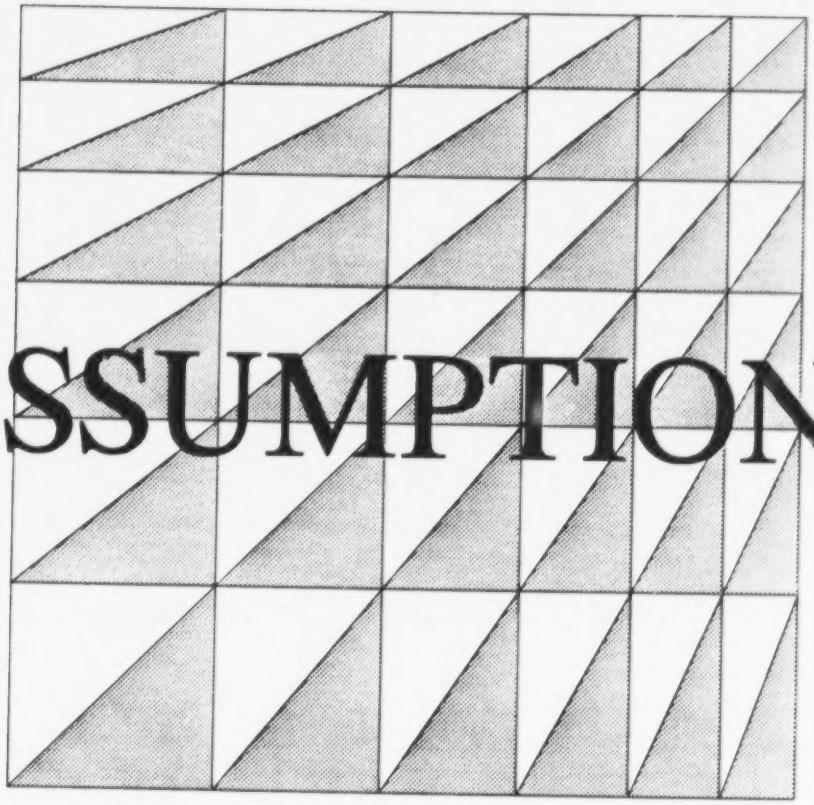
BACKGROUND

Incoming students at Miami-Dade Community College must sit for a state mandated basic skills battery in reading, written English expression, computations and algebra. Should they fail to achieve the designated score on any of the sub-tests, they are directed into basic skills courses for remediation prior to registering for college level courses.

A difficulty arises for our students in regard to another state mandate that requires students to remediate any skill deficiencies within three enrollments. If unsuccessful after three attempts at any skill, they are no longer eligible to take courses at a public, state supported, post-secondary institution. This necessitates the need to maximize the learning environment and supports for students in the basic skills programs so that they can complete their course work successfully within the required time period.

Our basic skills courses are organized in such a way as to provide didactic instruction, monitored practice and independent learning activities. Students complete the independent learning activities of their curriculum in our Learning Media Center where prescribed activities focus on individual needs. The classroom instructors and the Learning Media Center personnel needed a more comprehensive communication system to provide academic progress and accounting information pathways between faculty and students. Students needed a more efficient way to be kept abreast of their progress. Appropriate intervention for students whose difficulties were psychologically or socially based rather than academically

founded needed to be instituted. And all constituencies in this academic endeavor needed a unifying force.



ASSUMPTIONS

The conceptual framework for our strategic plan revolved around certain assumptions. Some of these were about students, others involved systems of information management and communication.

Our assumptions about students included the ideas that:

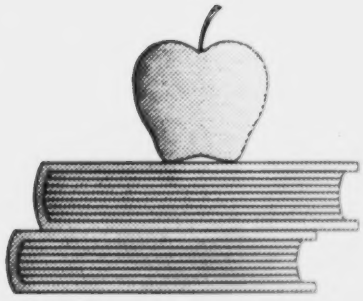
1. if external barriers are removed--child care, transportation, living expenses, and identification with other individuals or groups on campus--the chance that students will drop out is reduced;
2. time on task is paramount. Regular attendance is a discriminator of successful students as compared to those who drop out;
3. effort and motivation are critical to student success. Reinforcement needs to come soon and often when the ultimate goal appears to be far away;
4. given an appropriate array of learning materials, each student has the potential to successfully master the course competencies in basic skills areas;
5. the institutional value for individual differences can flourish best in a nurturing environment.

Our assumptions regarding information systems included:

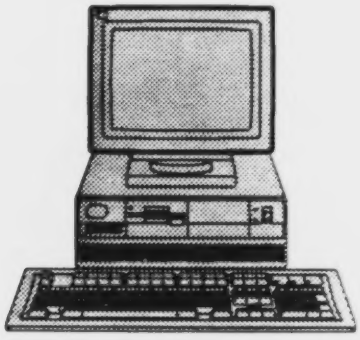
1. user friendliness for faculty and students as an essential element to ensure use by either group;
2. the need for a data base to generate progress reports, letters, and tracking information to reduce

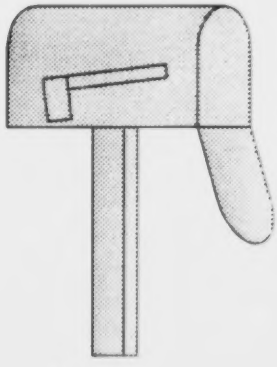
the complexities of movement through the college preparatory basic skills program.

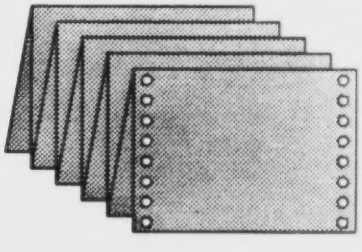
3. the ability to use the computer's built-in clock-calendar to keep track of sign-in/out times for positive attendance accounting.



OBJECTIVES







Specific development focused on the following objectives:

1. personalizing communications regarding students' status

   To accomplish this, data regarding all aspects of student performance are captured within a menu driven data base. Student records are down-loaded from the college mainframe computer and entered into the program.

   Personal letters are generated bi-weekly to update students on their progress to date and suggest alternatives if they are experiencing difficulties.

   Reports describing academic performance and attendance information are available in hard copy or on-screen that are accurate and complete.

2. Identifying and customizing types of support and resources, both academic and personal

   Impediments of an academic or social nature are determined through personal contact between mentor and student with referral to the appropriate resource as necessary.

   Learning styles are matched to teaching strategy when appropriate.

   Peer tutors are assigned or individual learning modules developed for those experiencing academic difficulty.

3. Enhancing data management

   Recordkeeping of students' academic progress, tracking between and within given courses and accurate attendance accounting are possible using a menu-driven database

developed in-house.

Attendance is tracked using a bar code scanner and uses the computer's clock/calendar to record sign-in/out times.

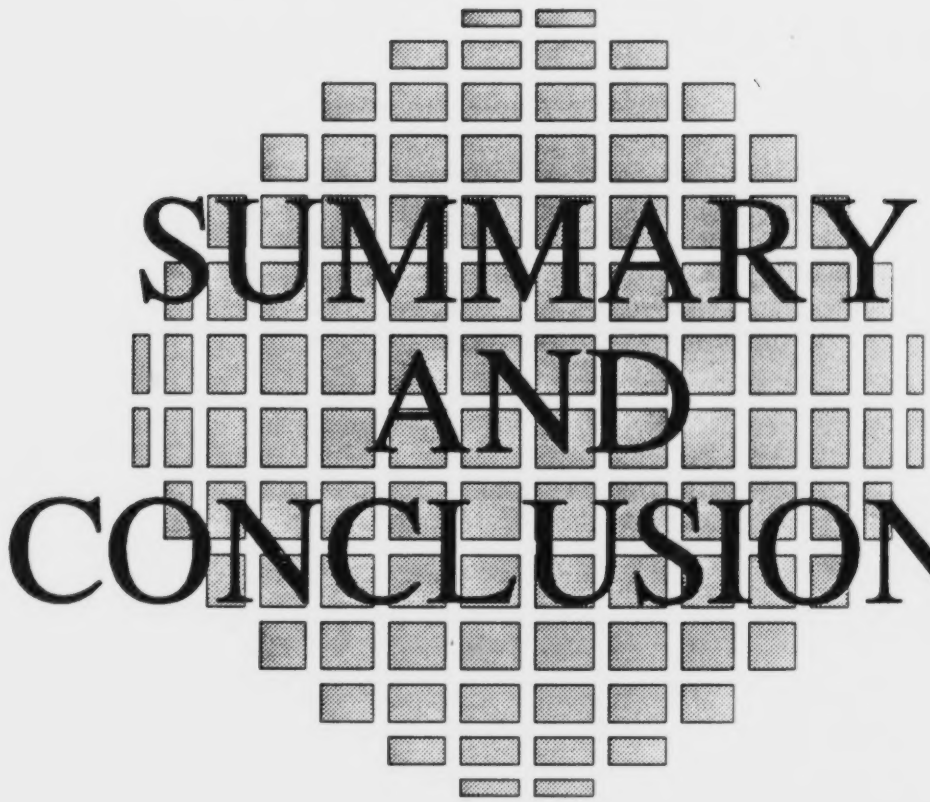
Reports regarding students' completion of independent learning activities in the Learning Media Center can be generated for faculty.

Bar-coded forms are used by faculty to record student participation and success in class. A light pen scanner is used to load the information into the program.

4. Systematically analyze course and program effectiveness

Evaluation of the project is both formative and summative. During the design stage many of the forms, screens and procedures were pilot-tested with faculty and students to assess user friendliness. Availability of community resources and funding sources for students experiencing child care or financial hardship were revised. Realistic expectations regarding the time and talent required of the mentor were adjusted to involve more faculty in the project. Summative evaluation at this point is incomplete but will include course completions, success rates on the college preparatory level, the general education curriculum and the program courses. Graduation rates will be considered finally, but it is our belief that successful retention of students really revolves around their completing their

goals----and sometimes their goals do not require completing a program and graduating. Student success and retention are perceived in a non-traditional sense and are thereby not necessarily equated with graduation rates.


SUMMARY
AND
CONCLUSIONS

Unique aspects

Our strategic plan for retention attempts to interface many of the systems already in place at the College beneath one umbrella. Student services, such as guidance and counseling, traditionally housed within the advisement department, become a part of this plan.

Students receive nurturing from a number of sources: first, from the counselor/mentor with whom they interact from their first experience at the campus until they exit with their degree or certification; second, from fellow students with whom they form primary groups that act as peer tutors for each other and that develop support relationships so often missing in an institution where student interaction occurs more often by chance than by design.

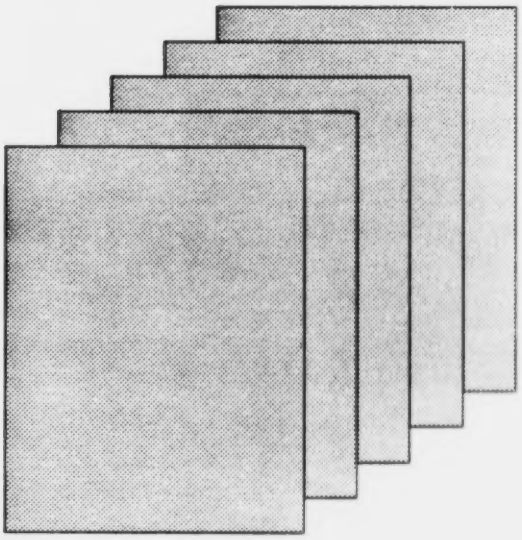
Student data regarding all aspects of their Miami-Dade experience can be entered and retrieved readily. Tracking within and between courses can be accomplished and accurate data regarding progress toward successful completion of courses be made available to those in a position to provide early intervention when problems arise.

Next steps

Future plans call for extending the retention program to focus on nursing and allied health technologies program students. The resources and supports will differ from program to program but the nurturing and personalizing of instruction will remain.

EXHIBITS

FORMS



Week No: 1

Week Starting Date: 01/02/89

Course Number: REA 0002

Course Sequence: 400-23120

College Prep Reading 2

Instructor: Janice Mese

* Circle "Y" if student is present and "N" if not present .

	T		R		T		R	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
	T		R		T		R	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
	T		R		T		R	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
	T		R		T		R	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
	T		R		T		R	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
	T		R		T		R	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

Week Number: 1 Week Starting Date: 01/02/89

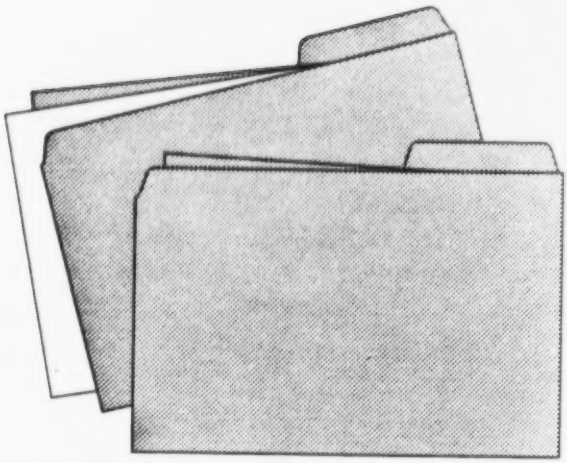
Course Number: ENC 0007 Course Sequence: 400-23035

College Prep Writing2 Instructor: Janice Mese

* Circle "A" or "B" or "C" or "D" for TEST and EFFORT score .

[redacted]				[redacted]				
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
TEST:								
EFFORT:								
[redacted]				[redacted]				
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
TEST:								
EFFORT:								
[redacted]				[redacted]				
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
TEST:								
EFFORT:								
[redacted]				[redacted]				
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
TEST:								
EFFORT:								
[redacted]				[redacted]				
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
TEST:								
EFFORT:								
[redacted]				[redacted]				
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
TEST:								
EFFORT:								

REPORTS



Miami-Dade Community College, Medical Center Campus
LMC Instructor's Request Attendance Report
Report's Date : 05/15/89

Course Number	Sequence Number	Last Name	Student Number
ENC 0006	400-23020	[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 24 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 24 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 23 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 0 Hours 0 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 20 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 19 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 19 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 19 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 1 Hours 18 Minutes	
		[illegible]	[illegible]
		** Total 0 Hours 46 Minutes	

Miami-Dade Community College, Medical Center Campus
LMC Student's Request Attendance Report
Report's Date : 05/15/89

Student Number	Course Number	Sequence Number	Date & Time	Hours	Minutes
8171223	ENC 0006	400-23020	05/15/89 13:54:08	1	20
			05/15/89 15:31:52	0	4
			** TOTAL	1	24

Miami-Dade Community College, Medical Center Campus
Student Total Time Report
Report's Date: 05/15/89

Course Number	Course Sequence	Last Name	Student Number	Class Time	LMC Time	Total Time
ENC 0006	400-23020	[illegible]	[illegible]	14.67	1.40	16.07
		[illegible]	[illegible]	11.00	1.40	12.40
		[illegible]	[illegible]	14.67	1.38	16.05
		[illegible]	[illegible]	12.83	0.00	12.83
		[illegible]	[illegible]	12.83	1.33	14.17
		[illegible]	[illegible]	12.83	1.32	14.15
		[illegible]	[illegible]	12.83	N/A	12.83
		[illegible]	[illegible]	14.67	1.32	15.98
		[illegible]	[illegible]	5.50	N/A	5.50
		[illegible]	[illegible]	14.67	N/A	14.67
		[illegible]	[illegible]	11.00	1.32	12.32
		[illegible]	[illegible]	12.83	1.30	14.13
		[illegible]	[illegible]	12.83	0.77	13.60

Miami-Dade Community College, Medical Center Campus
Learning Media Center Attendance Report
Report's Date : 05/15/89

Course Number	Sequence Number	Student Number	Date & Time	Hours	Minutes
ENC 0006	400-23020	[illegible]	05/15/89 13:57:57	1	19
			** TOTAL	1	19
		[illegible]	05/15/89 13:54:08	1	20
			05/15/89 15:31:52	0	4
			** TOTAL	1	24
		[illegible]	04/20/89 09:25:52	0	46
			** TOTAL	0	46
		[illegible]	05/15/89 13:54:50	1	21
			05/15/89 15:32:37	0	3
			** TOTAL	1	24
		[illegible]	05/15/89 13:56:25	1	20
			** TOTAL	1	20
		[illegible]	05/15/89 15:34:21	0	0
			** TOTAL	0	0
		[illegible]	05/15/89 13:59:22	1	19
			** TOTAL	1	19
		[illegible]	05/15/89 14:00:04	1	18

Page 1
Miami-Dade Community College, Medical Center Campus
Student Call Back Report
Report Date: 05/16/89

Course Number	Week Number	Week Starting Date	Last Name	Student Number	Absences
ENC 0006	1	01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
	2	01/09/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/09/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/09/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/09/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/09/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
	3	01/16/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/16/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/16/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/16/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
	4	01/23/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/23/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/23/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
ENC 0007	1	01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
MAT 0024	1	01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
REA 0002	1	01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
		01/02/89	[illegible]	[illegible]	1

Student Test Report
Report Date: 05/16/89

Course Number	Sequence Number	Week Number	Student Number	Last Name	Start Week Date	Test Grade Code
ENC 0006	400-23020	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
MAT 0024	400-23085	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	D
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
REA 0002	400-23120	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
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			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
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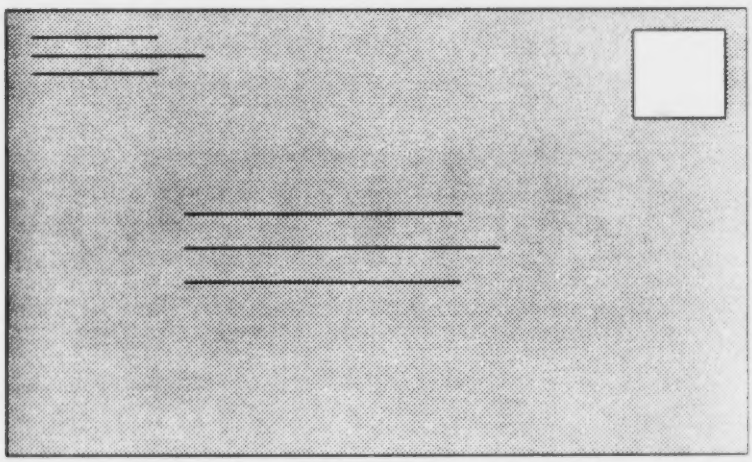
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C

Student Homework Report
Report Date: 05/16/89

Course Number	Sequence Number	Week No	Last Name	Student Number	Start Week Date	Grade Code	Actual Grade
ENC 0006	400-23020	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	D	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A	N/A
MAT 0024	400-23085	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	D	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
REA 0002	400-23120	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	D	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	B	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	A	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A
			[illegible]	[illegible]	01/30/89	C	N/A

LETTERS



MIAMI-DADE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Number one in America.

May 16, 1989

[redacted]
[redacted]
MIAMI, FL. 33168

Dear [redacted]:

In order to be successful in your courses it is necessary to make a major commitment of time and energy. Below are listed the grades and attendance records you have achieved in the past four weeks.

Course	Sequence	Test	Effort	Absences
ENC 0006	400-23020	C	A	1
REA 0002	400-23120	A	A	1

Please check carefully and contact your instructor or the staff in the Learning Center if you have any questions. They will be glad to discuss your progress as well as the various ways we have available to help you.

Sincerely

Your Instructors

MIAMI-DADE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Number one in America.

May 17, 1989

[redacted]
[redacted]
MIAMI, FL. 33161

Dear [redacted]:

The end of the term is almost here. Your academic progress and attendance records are listed below and provide you with up-to-the-minute information regarding each of the courses you are taking.

Course	Sequence	Test	Effort	Absences
ENC 0006	400-23020	C	B	2

Remember that time missed in class must be made up in the Learning Center. Assignments can be made up there as well with the permission of your instructor.

Sincerely,

Your Instructors

MIAMI-DADE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Number one in America

May 17, 1989

[redacted]
[redacted]
MIAMI, FL. 33135

Dear [redacted]:

We are nearing the middle of the term and the time and effort you are putting in are making a difference in the progress you are achieving in your courses. Below are listed the grades and attendance records you have earned thus far.

Course	Sequence	Test	Effort	Absences
MAT 0024	400-23085	B	A	0
REA 0002	400-23120	A	A	0

Please contact your instructors or the Learning Center staff if you are experiencing difficulties. We want to help.

Sincerely,

Your Instructors

ERIC Clearinghouse for
Junior Colleges JUN 16 1989